DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 894 CS 503 949

TITLE Basic Listening Skills.
INSTITUTION Illinois Speech and Theatre Association.; Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield.
PUB DATE Sep 82
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Guides; Interpersonal Relationship; *Learning Activities; *Listening Comprehension; *Listening Skills; Preschool Education; *Speech Instruction; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Intended to help school districts or classroom teachers develop and implement listening skills programs, this manual begins by stressing the importance of listening instruction and of the preparatory phase of listening readiness. This information is followed by a discussion of teaching assumptions about listening behavior that have been supported through research on listening skills. Listening contexts are then identified as they relate to communication functions (informing, controlling, imagining, feeling, ritualizing) and audience contexts (intrapersonal, interpersonal, grouping). The next section identifies basic listening skills for preschool through grade 12 and indicates whether the skill for the grade level should be introduced, focused, reviewed, or maintained. The final sections provide sample listening activities on becoming informed for preschool, on imagining for grades K-3, on feeling for grades 4-6, on ritualizing for grades 7-9, and on being controlled for grades 10-12. The description of each activity identifies the skills to be emphasized and includes directions for the teaching and assessment of the skills. (HOD)

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BASIC LISTENING SKILLS

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SECTION

1982

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Edward Copeland, Chairman
Illinois State Board of Education

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CS503469

Funds for the development and printing of this publication were provided by Chapter II, Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (Block Grant) to the Illinois State Board of Education.

FOREWORD

It is through listening skills that our students learn to communicate with the world around them, and it is most often through listening skills that they gain knowledge in their formal education structures. Yet, the teaching of a structured and sequenced listening curricula, K-12, is seldom found in the school. This publication is dedicated to the concept of initiating development of and awareness for a K-12 listening curricula program, formally taught and regularly scheduled.

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to cooperate with the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association to develop and provide this publication for Illinois educators as a response to the need for educational materials in Oral Communications. Together we formed a special task force to develop materials and to research the needs of oral communications skills, designated as part of the four basic skill areas. This publication is a portion of a series of materials which have resulted from the task force activities. Members of the special task force on basic listening skills include:

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I would like to especially thank those educators who both conceived of the idea and need for this document and who are offering their services to see that this is implemented successfully in Illinois.

Donald G. Gill
State Superintendent of Education

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INTRODUCTION

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association began a cooperative program in 1980 to develop materials in basic oral communication to assist local school districts in the development of programs which would bring about improved teaching of oral communication skills. Since the materials published to date in this series do not distinguish between listening and speaking skills and since:

listening is the most frequently used form of communication behavior,
listening is a learned behavior which can be taught by classroom teachers, and
listening behavior can be significantly improved,

it is appropriate that materials which focus specifically upon listening skills be produced.

> We propose that all students from the very first years of formal schooling learn not only to "read and write," but also to read with understanding, write with clarity, and listen and speak effectively. In addition, they should become proficient in the use of numbers...The mastery of these skills is the foundation of common learning.[1]

This quotation from A Quest for Common Learning (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1981) indicates the increased attention in recent years to the need for a school curriculum which has a solid foundation in the basic skills of reading, writing, oral communication, and computation. In part, this attention has come about through the impact of federal basic skills legislation, but it is also the consequence of a growing recognition by parents and teachers that students must study all forms of communication (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) if they are to have effective and productive lives.

The Importance of Listening Instruction

We all spend a great deal of time listening to each other. Research, for example, has illustrated consistently that close to three-fourths of our working hours are spent in some form of communication, and of that time approximately

45% is devoted to listening,
30% is devoted to talking,
15% is devoted to reading, and
10% is devoted to writing.

Yet listening skills are the least taught of any of these communication skills. We devote the most instruction time to teaching writing, then, reading and, finally, speaking.

The business community certainly recognizes that listening is a skill critical to job performance as evidenced by a multitude of recent studies. These same studies report, however, that employers find oral communication skills (including listening) the area in which employees are least proficient. Assume that each worker only makes one listening error a year that results in a few dollars worth of lost time or in a ruined product. Multiply that minor error we each make by the millions of American workers, and the obvious loss to the economy is staggering. Since most of us retain less than 25% of what we hear, it is safe to assume that costly errors are being made.[2]

Even more important to each of us is that through listening we acquire knowledge, develop language, and increase our understanding of each other. Why, then, isn't listening a part of the formal instructional program of most schools? Probably the major reason is that we spend so much time talking and hearing others talk, we tend to take these behaviors for granted. Most of us do not realize the importance of the speaking and listening processes in virtually every aspect of our lives; in fact, few of us even distinguish between hearing and listening.

Listening is a complex process beginning with hearing -- the physical effect of sound waves upon the human eardrum. After hearing sound, the physical changes occurring must then be interpreted (relating to our prior experience with such sounds), evaluated (deciding what use can be made of this information), and responded to (reacting to the information). Listening, then, is a four-step process, and if any of the steps are omitted, listening has not occurred. There are no shortcuts to effective listening. It is an active, time-consuming, and often difficult process when done well.

LISTENING READINESS

Stop! Look! and Listen! This age-old admonition has helped many safely over railroad crossings, but can be applied as well in improving student listening performance. If we are to significantly improve the listening skills of students, we must prepare them by helping to create a "readiness to listen" and a "readiness to learn." This demands far more than a teacher mandate to "Be quiet and listen."

There are two basic phases of listening readiness to be considered. First, there is the preliminary phase of listening readiness characteristic of every student that may well parallel learning readiness. This phase includes two levels of readiness to listen. The general level of readiness to listen is related to student attitudes toward school, the home environment, etc. Then there is a specific level of readiness at any given moment based upon various factors in the immediate situation. It is the teacher's task to recognize these varying levels of readiness, both general and specific, and to help each student develop an awareness and competency in listening.

Second, there is the preparatory phase which should precede each formal lesson in listening instruction and practice. One should always begin any listening activity by structuring internal and external environments to be conducive to good listening. Stop! - bring activities to a halt. Look! - create a singular focus with purposeful attending. And Listen! - hear, interpret, evaluate, and respond to the message.

Through careful and consistent practice in the use of listening skills, students measurably improve their listening skills. Since the vast majority of student classroom time is spent in listening, what better way can we enhance student learning - the primary goal of education - than by teaching them to listen effectively?

TEACHING ASSUMPTIONS

A great deal of research on listening skills has been conducted which clearly supports the need for programs in schools which focus specifically upon the improvement of listening performance. It has been demonstrated, for example, that:

Communication ability, e.g., listening, changes throughout our lives;

Listening ability is directly related to

- acquiring such other skills as reading and writing,
- the improvement of our intellectual capacities,
- our self-concepts and sense of well being,
- our ability to overcome egocentric speech (inability to take several perspectives at the same time),
- learning to take turns in conversations,
- establishing and maintaining relationships;

Listening is the most significant means of gaining information;

Listening is not a natural result of engaging in the communication process; and

Without instruction, students show little improvement or change in their listening behavior.

Obviously, little change in listening behavior can be expected unless teachers in all age level groupings and in all subject areas begin to:

1. develop instructional programs with sequences and structure throughout the K-12 curriculum;

2. develop specific instructional objectives and activities that focus on listening skills;

3. provide continuing opportunities to engage in a wide variety of listening experiences including listening to peers as well as parents and teachers;

4. utilize instructional strategies which focus upon the processing of ideas, rather than on specific details and usage of mechanical techniques;

5. seek out resources and background information about listening; and

6. shift focus away from listening behavior as a means of classroom control to listening as a set of active skills necessary for learning.

LISTENING CONTEXTS

People communicate to one another for a variety of reasons. Effective listeners tend to be those who can perceive purpose both in the speaker's message and in their own listening activities. These communication functions include receiving information, persuading and being persuaded, sharing feelings, engaging in imaginative thought, and interacting socially.

At the same time, we operate as listeners in a specific audience context ranging from listening to oneself (intrapersonal) to mass audience situations. Consequently, it is important that students learn listening skills associated with a variety of messages differing in purpose and intended audiences.

These differing functions and audience contexts are illustrated in the following matrix[3] (examples listed in each cell are intended to be suggestive of activities, not a comprehensive listing):

AUDIENCES \ FUNCTIONS	BECOMING INFORMED	BEING CONTROLLED	IMAGINING	FEELING	RITUALIZING
INTRA-PERSONAL	Reflecting	Making decisions	Fantasizing	Identifying own emotions	"Psyching up"
INTER-PERSONAL	Understanding directions	Following instructions	Seeing another's perspective	Reacting to other's feelings	Taking turns
GROUPINGS	Seeking opinions	Supporting group decision	Assuming a role	Responding to group tension	Following agenda
PUBLICS	Asking questions	Evaluating arguments	Reacting to story-telling	Responding to characters in a play	Applauding, raising hands
MEDIA	Following a news story	Responding to advertisements	Visualizing a radio drama	Empathizing with program characters	Becoming "addicted" to programs

Communication Functions[4]

Functions refer to the fact that we listen purposefully -- we seek something out of the listening activity. These purposes include:

INFORMING: The major purpose is to secure information. Activities include receiving information, questioning, naming, relating, acknowledging, comprehending.

CONTROLLING: Generally this function is associated closely with message senders. Listeners, however, must also be active participants in the process of controlling behavior through such acts as responding to command, accepting, responding appropriately to threats and warnings, contracting, refusing, bargaining, rejecting, arguing, acknowledging.

IMAGINING: Imagining forms of communication include those activities involving listeners in such imaginary situations as fantasizing, storytelling, role-playing, etc.

FEELING: The major purpose of feeling forms of communication is to express attitudes and feelings as an affective response. Such activities as responding to emotional states, commiserating, blaming, and showing emotional responses tend to be more spontaneous forms of communication.

RITUALIZING: Ritualizing forms of communication are a primary means of facilitating interactions socially and of maintaining relationships. These acts include greeting, taking turns in conversations, participating in amenities, listening to recitations, and audience behavior.

Audience Contexts

We should consider not only the purposes for listening, but also the varying audience situations in which listening occurs, including

INTRAPERSONAL: This involves "talking" to self including self analysis, setting goals, rationalizing, praising, blaming, creating self-concept.

INTERPERSONAL: Communication among two people or in small, informal gatherings. Activities include interacting with friends, parents, in formal and informal interviewing situations, etc.

GROUPINGS: Small numbers of people interacting in a face-to-face situation who have an awareness of a "group identity" such as families, peer groupings, athletic groups, committees.

PUBLICS: Public communication involves presentations delivered before larger groups of people including public speeches, lectures, court deliberations, legislative deliberations.

MEDIA: Communications from a message sender transmitted to the listener through some intervening technology such as radio, television, or film.

Listening skills necessary for any given situation will vary according to the purposes for listening and the audience context. Since, however, listener needs and motivations are the primary determiners of effective listening, skills have been structured by function in this booklet.

The listening skills listed are presented in the five function categories of INFORMING, CONTROLLING, IMAGINING, FEELING, AND RITUALIZING. Each specific skill is accompanied by grade groupings and indications as to the appropriate level of skill development to be implemented. For example,

		Pre	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
1.0	INFORMING					
1.1	Recognizing intent/ purpose of message	I*	I*	F*	R*	M*

*Letters refer to the following definitions[5]

I = Introduce skills: Lessons and activities are an initial exposure to this skill. Defining, explaining, discussing are the primary activities.

F = Focus the skill: Activities and lessons should focus the student's attention on the functional nature of the skill. Students should be expected to utilize and demonstrate the skill.

R = Review the skill: Lessons and activities should be designed to provide opportunities to practice and reflect about this skill to insure understanding and competency.

M = Maintain the skill: At this level, lessons and activities should be designed to provide a wide variety of listening experiences through which the student can integrate and reinforce the skill into his/her communication repertoire.

Each of the five functions and skill sections will be followed by a suggested activity. Activities include a variety of audience contexts and grade levels for illustrative purposes.

A SPECIAL NOTE TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

This document is structured to encourage school districts to develop and implement K-12 listening skill programs. Once such programs are established and operating successfully, some teachers, particularly in high school, may be able to focus their attention on reviewing and maintaining specific listening skills. The points at which skills are introduced, focused, reviewed, and maintained in the document assume such "ideal" conditions. In actual practice, teachers will find that some

students have not developed their listening skills to the same extent as other students and will have to remain flexible in their use of the guidelines.

Although this document focuses on K-12 implementation, classroom teachers can use the guidelines for developing listening skills programs in their own classes even though a K-12 program may not have been adopted by the district(s). In such cases, the teacher should assess the general level of skill development represented by his/her students before constructing the classroom listening program. If such classroom programs are successful and the teacher encourages others to use listening activities, he/she may provide the stimulus needed for program adoption by the school district.

BASIC LISTENING SKILLS

1.0 BECOMING INFORMED	Preschool	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
1.1 Concentrating, focusing, attending	I	F	R	M	M
1.2 Adjusting to physical/ mental distractions	I	F	R	R-M	M
1.3 Seeking new information	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
1.4 Responding/producing feedback to information	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
1.5 Questioning to improve comprehension of information	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
1.6 Identifying nonverbal forms of communication	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
1.7 Recognizing intent/purpose of information	I	I	F	R	M
1.8 Determining relationships among ideas	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
1.9 Identifying main ideas of a message	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
1.10 Judging usefulness of information	I	I	F	F-R	R
1.11 Drawing logical inferences from a message	I	I	F	F-R	R
1.12 Developing open-mindedness toward source/message	-	I	F	R	M
1.13 Summarizing information	-	I	I-F	F-R	R-M
1.14 Identifying significant detail of information	-	I	I-F	F	R-M
1.15 Identifying effect of situation on message	-	I	I-F	F	R-M
1.16 Following sequence of information	-	I	I	F	R-M
1.17 Differentiating relevant from nonrelevant material	-	I	I	F	F-R

1.18 Relating information to personal values	-	-	I	F	R-M
1.19 Relating new information to the known	-	-	I	I-F	R
1.20 Distinguishing fact from opinion	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
1.21 Assessing credibility of information	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
1.22 Judging sufficiency of information detail	-	-	I	I-F	F
1.23 Judging ethics of information	-	-	I	I	F

I = Introduce skill, F = Focus skill, R = Review skill, M = Maintain skill

SAMPLE LISTENING ACTIVITY - PRESCHOOL

Function: Becoming Informed

Title: "Visit by a Fireman"

Skills: to identify the main ideas of a message
to focus attention
to recognize purpose of a message
to question to improve comprehension

Directions:

Arrange for a fireman to visit the pre-school class to talk about what to do in case of a fire. Information covered should include (1) precautions to take to prevent fires, (2) safety procedures in case of a fire, and (3) how to get help in case of a fire. Make certain that the presentation is simple and short with visual aids (if possible) and activities. For example, (1) might be limited to electric plugs/appliances, candles and matches, and cooking stoves: (2) might include going to neighbor and dialing fire department number. Before fireman arrives, have group decide what questions they should ask of the fireman. Follow-up activities could include reading a story about a fireman to the class, having children talk to parents about how to leave the house in case of fire, etc.

Assessment:

Students can demonstrate ability to dial the phone (after practice). They should be asked "Why the fireman talked to us, " "What the fireman talked about," and "What do we know about (1), (2) and (3)." Children should be able to repeat information learned. The teacher can observe the questioning behavior of students during the visit.

2.0 IMAGINING	Preschool	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
2.1 Concentrating, focusing, attending	I	F	R	M	M
2.2 Adjusting to physical/mental distractions	I	F	R	R-M	M
2.3 Responding in imaginative situations	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
2.4 Seeking "enriching" experiences	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
2.5 Differentiating between fictional and real-life messages	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
2.6 Following sequences of story	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
2.7 Responding to mood	I	I-F	F	R	M
2.8 Judging imaginative effect	I	I-F	F	R	R-M
2.9 Determining implications of detail	I	I-F	F	R	R-M
2.10 Participating willingly in creative activities	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
2.11 Identifying effect of situation on imaginative messages	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
2.12 Identifying nonverbal cues used to enhance imagination	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
2.13 Relating unknown situations to known experiences	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
2.14 Identifying theme of a fantasy	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
2.15 Determining implications of main ideas	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
2.16 Creating a logical structure for fantasy	I	I	F	F-R	R
2.17 Identifying significant details in imaginative messages	-	I	I-F	F	R-M

2.18 Recognizing creative functions of message	-	I	I	F	F-R
2.19 Judging sufficiency of creative detail	-	-	I	I-F	F-R

I = Introduce skill, R = Review skill, F = Focus skill, M = Maintain skill

SAMPLE LISTENING ACTIVITY - GRADES K-3

Function: Imagining

Title: "Storytelling"

Skills: to identify themes of stories
to identify signficant details in imaginative messages
to respond to mood
to focus attention

Directions:

Select a story with a dominant mood (scary, sad, funny) and tell it to the students. Story must be short and the oral presentation should be expressive to help create visual images for students. Arrange lighting, music, etc., where appropriate to enhance the mood and create an atmosphere. Other techniques include

planning an introduction to begin the story

creating places in the story for audience participation

speaking up so audience can hear you, using plenty of eye contact, varying the pacing of your delivery

knowing story well

creating a good ending for the story.

Follow-up activities might include (1) act out the story; (2) create own stories with same mood; (3) have student describe a setting with others guessing the "kind" of story that would fit that setting, e.g., scary, (4) draw pictures of the characters; (5) hold a class discussion of theme, mood, and details that helped students "picture" the story.

Assessment:

Teacher observation of follow-up activities to see if students demonstrate identification and response skills.

3.0 FEELING	Preschool	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
3.1 Concentrating, focusing, attending	I	F	R	M	M
3.2 Adjusting to mental/physical distractions	I	F	R	R-M	M
3.3 Responding appropriately to feelings	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
3.4 Identifying nonverbal cues to feelings	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
3.5 Questioning to improve understanding of emotions (empathy)	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
3.6 Responding to mood	I	I-F	F	R	M
3.7 Recognizing and accepting speaker's feelings	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
3.8 Identifying feelings	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
3.9 Determining implications of feelings and overall effect	I	I	F	F-R	R
3.10 Recognizing reasons for feelings	-	I	F	F-R	R-M
3.11 Making inferences about feelings	I	I	F	F-R	R
3.12 Appropriately delaying emotional response	-	I	I-F	F	F-R
3.13 Relating unknown emotions to known feelings	-	-	I	I-F	R
3.14 Identifying effect of situation on feelings	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
3.15 Judging sufficiency of emotional details	-	-	I	I-F	F

I = Introduce skill, F = Focus skill, R = Review skill, M = Maintain skill

SAMPLE LISTENING ACTIVITY - GRADES 4-6

Function: Feeling

Title: "Identifying Feelings of Characters on a TV Show"

Skills:
- to recognize reasons for feelings
- to identify feelings
- to relate unfamiliar emotions to known feelings
- to identify the effect of situations on feelings
- to concentrate/focus/attend
- to identify nonverbal cues to feelings

Directions:

Select (well in advance) a television drama for class members to watch (either in the home or through videotape at school). The "Afterschool Special" is often a good choice. Give specific directions as to what the student should be "looking for," and give examples for each. For example, in discussing the effect of situations on people, you might point out that all of us react differently depending upon whether we're alone, with strangers, or with friends.

After viewing the program, discuss as a class:

1. What were the feelings of various characters (at a given point in the story)?
2. What cues were given about the characters' feelings?
3. What did they say about their feelings?
4. Would they have felt the same way if the context were different?
5. Why did characters feel this way?
6. Have students experienced these feelings?

The teacher, of course, must view the program and prepare examples to illustrate each of the discussion points.

Follow-up activities could include having students read a story with the same theme and/or writing short statements about their favorite character.

Assessment:

The most effective means of assessing these skills is the use of teacher observation of class discussion. If this type of activity is conducted several times, the teacher should be able to observe which students seem to have which specific skill problems.

4.0 RITUALIZING	Preschool	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
4.1 Responding to appropriate social customs	I-F-R	F-R	R-M	M	M
4.2 Responding to mood	I-F-R	F-R	R-M	M	M
4.3 Identifying nonverbal communication rituals	I-F-R	F-R	M	M	M
4.4 Relating value of social rituals to own values	I-F	F	F-R	R	R-M
4.5 Adjusting to physical/mental distractions	I	F	R	R-M	M
4.6 Concentrating, focusing, attending	I	F	R	R-M	M
4.7 Recognizing appropriateness of social amenities	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
4.8 Participating willingly in social customs	I	I-F	F	R	M
4.9 Identifying effect of situation on social impact	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
4.10 Judging social impact	-	-	I	I-F	F-R

I = Introduce skill, F = Focus skill, R = Review skill, M = Maintain skill

SAMPLING LISTENING ACTIVITY - GRADES 7-9

Function: Ritualizing

Title: "Communications Night"[6]

Skills: to respond to appropriate social customs
to identify nonverbal communication rituals
to recognize appropriateness of social amenities
to participate willingly in social customs
to identify effect of situation on social amenities

Description:

This activity could serve as a "capstone" experience to an introductory unit in communications which combines speaking and listening activities and informing and ritualizing functions. Plans for this activity must be made well ahead of time. Basically, "Communication Night" is a program scheduled around 7:30 on a weekday night to which students invite their parents for dessert and coffee/punch. All students are to introduce parents to the teacher. Selected students make welcoming remarks, introduce guests (principal for example) and deliver brief "after dinner speeches." Sometimes (if numbers are not too large) every student is given an opportunity to introduce parents to audience.

A variety of skills can be demonstrated including initiating and responding to social amenities and customs, evaluating the effect of situations on communication, working in groups, learning microphone techniques, preparing and delivering speeches, etc.

The amount of preparation out of class can be reduced a great deal by requesting a dollar donation from each guest to defray expenses (let them know in advance!) and asking the home economics club to prepare food, serve, and clean up in return for an agreed-upon contribution to the club's fund.

Assessment:

Request that a qualified student videotape the program. Class viewing of the tape and discussion of skills demonstrated provide the teacher with an opportunity to observe skill performance on tape as well as judge abilities to identify various communication factors by students during the class discussion.

5.0 BEING CONTROLLED	Preschool	K-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
5.1 Concentrating, focusing, attending	I	F	R	M	M
5.2 Adjusting to physical/ mental distractions	I	F	R	R-M	M
5.3 Responding to influence	I	F	F-R	R-M	M
5.4 Questioning to improve understanding of behavior/ content	I	I-F	F-R	R-M	M
5.5 Recognizing why and how messages influence	I	I-F	F	R	R-M
5.6 Making value judgments about message influence	I	I-F	F	R	R-M
5.7 Developing an objective attitude toward source/ message influence	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
5.8 Identifying nonverbal forms of control	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
5.9 Appropriately delaying emotional response	I	I-F	F	F-R	R-M
5.10 Identifying major influencing factors of a message	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
5.11 Determining implications of main ideas	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
5.12 Determining relationships among forms of influence	I	I	F	F-R	R-M
5.13 Identifying logical inferences	I	I	F	F-R	R
5.14 Judging effect of influence	I	I	F	F-R	R
5.15 Identifying supporting detail	-	I	I-F	F	R-M
5.16 Determining implication of detail	-	I	I-F	F	R-M
5.17 Identifying impact of situation on message influence	-	I	I-F	F	R-M

5.18 Following sequence of argument	-	I	I	F	R-M
5.19 Assessing relevance of materials to the argument	-	-	I	F	F-R
5.20 Judging validity of main ideas	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
5.21 Assessing credibility of arguments	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
5.22 Differentiating fact from opinion	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
5.23 Identifying message bias	-	-	I	I-F	F-R
5.24 Judging sufficiency of supporting detail	-	-	I	I-F	F
5.25 Judging ethics of influence	-	-	I	I	F

I = Introduce skill, F = Focus skill, R = Review skill, M = Maintain skill

SAMPLE LISTENING ACTIVITY - GRADES 10-12

Function: Being Controlled

Title: "Evaluating Television Commercials"

Skills:
to respond to influence
to recognize why and how messages influence
to identify nonverbal forms of control
to identify major influencing factors of a message
to judge effect of influence

Direction:

Begin the unit by examining ways in which we persuade and influence others. Utilizing advertisements from magazine, newspaper, etc., expose student to various forms of appeal (e.g., sympathy, security, love, etc.).

After discussion, students will view a series of T.V. commercials. (The film "The Cleo Awards" is an excellent choice.) Students should be able to identify the different appeals in each.

After viewing the film, dicuss as a class:

1. The various types of appeals utilized
2. How advertisements (persuasive messages) are geared to a particular audience
3. How such audience variables as 1) age, 2) sex, 3) occupation, etc., are factors in audience analysis
4. Ways in which we judge whether the message was successful
5. The ethics involved in messages that influence

Follow-up activities could include a booklet containing various examples of motive appeals and a description of the audience to which the message is geared. Another activity might be allowing students to create their own product and develop a persuasive campaign to sell the product to a specific audience.

Assessment:

The most effective means of assessment in the area is the use of teacher observation of class discussion.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, A Quest for Common Learning (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Foundation, 1981), p. 36.

[2]Lea Stewart, Sheryl Triedley, and Pamela Cooper, Communication in the Corporation: A Guide to Understanding and Improvement (Dubuque, Iowa: Gorsuch-Scarisbrick, 1982).

[3]Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, The Wisconsin Alternative Curriculum Design in Basic English/Communication Skills (Grade 9/Grade 10), Bulletin Number 2132 (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1981).

[4]Allen, R.R., and Kenneth L. Brown, Developing Communication Competence in Children. (Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1976).

[5]Wheaton District #200, Listening Skills Curriculum Scope and Sequence Schematic. (Wheaton, Illinois: Wheaton District #200, 1981).

[6]Suzanne Lows, "Communications Night," activity developed for Sycamore Junior High School, Sycamore District #427, Sycamore, Illinois.

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Mina Gail Halliday, editor. A Guide for Teaching Speech Today. Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1979.

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